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C O N F I R M A T I O N,

By RICHARD WATSON, *k*

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

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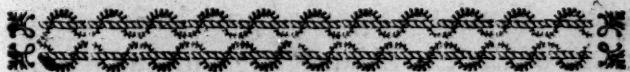
OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

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OF THE



MY YOUNG FRIEND,

THE Minister of your Parish has, I have good confidence, fully explained to you the Nature of that Rite which has now been performed; and you, on your part, have considered, I hope, as seriously as your age and ability will permit, its importance with respect to yourself. By the care of your Parents, you were baptized in your Infancy; and were thereby made a Member of the Church of Christ, at an age when you were incapable of giving your consent thereto: by a continuance of the same care you have been instructed in the Principles of that Religion, into which you were initiated by Baptism; and you have this day signified that consent, which at your baptism you could not

give. You have signified your belief of the truth of the Christian Religion, and bound yourself to live according to its precepts. You would, indeed, have been bound to obey the precepts of the Christian Religion, as far as they had come to your knowledge, though you had not been brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him. Confirmation does not lay upon you any new burden: you were not, before confirmation, at liberty to commit any action which you knew to be sinful; and you are not now, after confirmation, restrained from any action which you know to be innocent. Out of a sincere desire to promote your everlasting welfare, I have thought fit, on this occasion, to give you a word of advice: I shall never have so good an opportunity of doing it, nor can it at any time be more useful to you than at present; for your mind is, I trust, at present free from vice, and disposed to every thing that is good; and you will soon be tempted, both by the customs of the world, and your own appetites, to many things which are evil.

evil. May God sanctify this my feeble endeavour to serve you!

I BEGIN my advice with recommending it to you in the strongest manner,—to let no day pass without thinking of God, and offering up your prayers to him.—Your Parents, I hope, have not omitted to accustom you to this duty: if they have, though it will not become you to upbraid them for their neglect, yet it will certainly become you not to follow their example; you must do more for yourself in this particular than they have done for you. The Education of many young persons is extremely ill suited to promote their present happiness as Men, or their future happiness as Christians. Great numbers, especially in the lower classes of life, are wholly neglected from their very infancy; permitted to contract habits of swearing, lying, thieving, drinking, sabbath-breaking; of idleness, debauchery, and rudeness, without correction or reproof. From habits acquired at an early age the future quality of

a man's life, as to virtue or vice, is generally, and almost necessarily derived: how deplorable then is the condition of those Children who are suffered to grow up in ignorance, dishonesty, intemperance, and profaneness; whose parents are too wicked to restrain them, too stupid to instruct them! Others, in the higher ranks of life, are instructed with care in languages, in history, in philosophy, in music, in dancing, in every accomplishment which may fit them for a proper appearance in the world. Parents think the Education of their Children is properly finished when they have acquired these modish qualifications, none of which are of any worth when put in competition with a knowledge of Religion. That is either wholly neglected, or it is taught them in an improper manner: they are instructed by rote, in their nursery, in a few of its doctrines; but they are not, when they come out of it, familiarized to the practice of its duties; they are not taught to love and regard *the Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation to every one that*

*that believeth,** as the one unerring rule by which they ought to regulate every thought, word, and action of their future lives. This kind of religious knowledge tends to improve the heart, and is intirely different from that which consists in knowing the rise and progress of particular Doctrines and Sects; in being acquainted with the most noted objections to the truth of Christianity; in understanding how to obviate them, and in comprehending a variety of explanations, which Interpreters have affixed to difficult passages of Scripture: yet, alas! this curious, wrangling, speculative, and unfruitful sort of knowledge, is the only one which is taught those young Persons who are instructed in the Christian Religion; and it is much more than is taught young persons in general. A principal cause of this neglect, as to the religious education of Children in all conditions of life, is this—that many Parents are themselves very wicked, and very indifferent about Religion. — They have rarely any proper sense of it as a rule of

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* Rom. i. 16.

conduct, and they cannot therefore prescribe it to their children; or, if they do understand it, they are generally so immersed in viciousness of life, and a neglect of all such Christian duties as happen to clash with their inclinations, passions and prejudices, that they are ashamed to teach the necessity of obeying principles, which they themselves have not the grace to practise.

It is, in some measure, to attempt to remedy these defects of Education where they exist, and to confirm in goodness the minds of such young persons whose Education has not been neglected, that I make this address to all. I recommend to all—an early Piety as the root of every virtue, as the surest source of comfort in every stage and condition of life.—Your Parents, however good they may be, will, in the course of nature, be soon taken from you; friends you may have but few, or perhaps none who can, or at least who will assist you in your need. You are just entering into a world, where you will find every one bustling

bustling for his own advantage, and little
 regardful of that of others; you will meet
 with many hardships, and have many diffi-
 culties to struggle with; let your situation
 be what it may, you will stand in great
 need of a Protector who has power to suc-
 cour you, wisdom to see what is fittest for
 you, and goodness to give you every thing
 that will be of use to you. God is that
 Protector. He is most able, most wise,
 and most willing to guard you from misfor-
 tunes, and to bless you with all comforts;
 it is your highest interest to procure his fa-
 vour: you need not despair of obtaining it,
 if you will but endeavour to deserve it;
 and you will be most likely to endeavour
 to deserve it through the whole course of
 life, if you accustom yourself, in your
 younger years, to think of him with reve-
 rence, to pray to him with humility and
 hope, and to praise him with heart-felt gra-
 titude for all his goodness towards you.

I exhort you never to let either the plea-
 sures or the cares of life produce in you a

forgetfulness of God, and an indevout mind. A brutish hardness, and impenitence, and impiety of heart is the greatest possible evil which can befall you, let your condition be what it may. Riches will be a curse to you if they make you proud and arrogant, and disregardful of your Maker; and Poverty has no calamity belonging to it so great, as that abandoned contempt of God, that mad rashness with respect to futurity, which too often accompanies it. I warn you, whether you are born to poverty or riches, not to live as if there was no God in the world. He is not indeed the object of any of your senses, yet he is always with you; you cannot speak but he hears you; you cannot stir a step but he accompanies you. It depends upon yourself, whether you will make this adorable and incomprehensible Being, from whose Presence you cannot withdraw yourself; from whose Eye you cannot hide your actions; from whose Knowledge you cannot conceal your thoughts; it depends upon yourself, whether you will make him your Friend or Enemy.

Enemy. He is the Friend of Virtue, and the Enemy of Vice. If you are a follower of that which is good, he allows and encourages you to address him under appellations suited to your comprehension, and comfortable to your imperfection; he instructs you to call him Governor, Friend, and Father: but if you are bent on evil courses, you must consider him as a Judge and an Avenger, from whose mercy you have nothing to expect; for *without holiness no man shall, no man can see the Lord.**

MEDITATE again and again on the Nature of this supreme Being, and on the relation in which you stand to him. He is from everlasting to everlasting; you are just come into an existence which will have no end; but the manner of this your never-ceasing existence, will be happy or miserable, according as by your conduct in this world you please or displease him. He is all powerful, and disposed to give you every thing; you are weakness itself, and without him can have nothing. He re-

spects not your outward circumstances; you may unhappily have been instructed to mind little else. Men may scorn you for your meanness or poverty; men may flatter you for your rank or riches: God regards you for nothing but your goodness; for that, and for that only, will he reward you in this world, and in the next. Such meditations as these take up no time; they may be made in your chamber, in the field, in the highway, in the midst of the business and tumult of the world. I beseech you therefore, as you tender your own happiness temporal and eternal, to let the fear and the love of God dwell in you as an active principle; pray to him daily, think of him hourly, commit yourself to his guidance, and have confidence in his protection. Thus will you acquire an habit of dedicating every action to the will of your Maker; you will be persuaded that you live under his more immediate inspection, and that persuasion will generate in you holiness of life. If in the world you have affliction, you will bear it patiently,

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from knowing that it is the chastisement of an affectionate father, who perfectly knows what sort of discipline is best suited to advance your moral improvement. If in the world you have prosperity, you will refer your good fortune to his kindness; and this your pious gratitude will of itself become an occasion of the continuance of his goodness.

LET your prayers be rather frequent than long.—Their frequency will produce and preserve in you that disposition, with which you will become a proper object of God's protection, and without which the longest prayers cannot procure it for you. But whether you make long or short prayers, let them always proceed from the bottom of the heart. Rest not in the outward ceremony of repeating certain forms which have been taught you, whilst your inward thoughts are dwelling upon some other subject, or wandering in a distracted manner through a variety of subjects: this is the mere labour of the lips, and cannot
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avail you to any good ; it may be a sort of hypocrisy, and as such, being an abomination to God, will draw down evil on you. When you address the supreme Being, you must be attentive to what you are doing ; you must draw nigh to him with your heart, as well as with your lips ; you must think of the meaning of every word you utter ; you must be earnest in your petitions, and fervent in your hope of obtaining the completion of such as are proper to be granted.

THE subjects of your prayers will be various according to your wants. In bodily sickness, you will pray for health ; in mental uneasiness, for peace of mind ; in adversity, for protection ; in prosperity, that you may use the good things God has given you as means of your future salvation. Natural reason teaches you this ; but there is a subject of prayer which natural reason cannot teach you : it is by revelation that you are instructed to pray for the assistance of God's Spirit to enlighten your understanding,

standing, and to sanctify your heart. Deceive not yourself in this matter by a warm imagination, which often produces an excess of devotion; nor be you deceived by others. Beware of thinking that you are favoured with any extraordinary communications of God's Spirit, and shun the fellowship of those who pretend to them. Their pretensions, there is reason to believe, are grounded in self-delusion; for we charitably hope that they are not grounded in a worse principle, a desire of deluding others for their own benefit. The holy Spirit, we know, gave his assistance in an extraordinary manner to the first preachers of the Gospel, and they were sure of his *dwelling in them** by the power of speaking with new tongues, and by the other gifts which he distributed to them. We think we have the Authority of Scripture for saying that God still continues to *work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*† — to give his holy Spirit to them that ask him ‡ — but the manner in which the holy Spirit gives

* 1 Cor. iii. 16. † Phil. ii. 13. ‡ Luke ii. 13.

gives his assistance to faithful and pious persons is not attended with any certain sign of its being given, it is secret and unknown; you cannot distinguish the working, by which he *helpeth your infirmities*,* from the ordinary operations of your own mind.

WITH respect to what are esteemed temporal blessings, such as riches and honours, they so frequently, by being misused, become the occasions of temporal evil and of eternal ruin to those who possess them, that they ought to be but very inferior objects of your prayers; *seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*† But if you do pray for these things at all, it should always be with some such restriction as this—if thou, Lord, seest that they will be for my good.—And, indeed, it becomes us on all occasions, rather to pray that God would take us under his guidance, and would govern us by any means he thinks fit,

* Rom. viii. 26.

† Matt. vi. 33.

fit, whether by adversity or prosperity, so as to bring us to everlasting happiness, than to be very particular in our petitions to him. For we are sensual and short-sighted creatures; our carnal appetites will prompt us to ask for what is dangerous to our spiritual purity; and our ignorance of what may in the event be fittest for us, will, in many instances, render our very prayers, if granted, misfortunes to us. It is your duty to prefer your petitions at the Throne of God, and it is your interest in doing it to beg him with all humility and sincerity of heart to judge for you; to deal with you as a father dealeth with his child; to give you what he knoweth will be for your good, whether you ask for it or not; and to withhold from you what he knoweth will be for your harm, how earnestly soever you importune him for it. Even when you pray to be relieved from ignominy, from pain, and death, still it is your duty to acquiesce in the determinations of God, saying—*not my will, O Father, but thine be done*.*

THAT

* Luke xiii. 42.

THAT this habit of Piety, which I am so earnest in recommending, may be the more perfectly formed in you; to your private prayers and meditations, I hope, you will add, as frequently as you have opportunity, — an Attendance on places of Public Worship, and behave yourself with great seriousness when there. Make no silly excuses, such as the distance of the church, the badness of the weather, or of the roads, the want of proper clothes, and much less an attention to the business of your ordinary calling, for staying away from them: for an absence from places of public worship has been always considered as the beginning of an hardened and vicious course of life. Thanks be to God, there is great plenty of such places in this our Land; no one need go far to meet with instruction, nor be at much trouble to receive exhortation to piety and purity of manners. And, though I think it best for you to frequent the service of the Church of England, in which you have been educated, yet I caution you against finding
 fault

fault with those who are otherwise minded. Enter into no disputes with them, use no revilings towards them; nor be you disturbed in your mind by any harsh and uncharitable expressions with which they may think fit to censure your manner of devotion; but soberly, and steadily, and sincerely, follow the worship in which you have been instructed.

Do not, at any period of life, absent yourself from your Parish Church, from a belief that you know your duty, as well as the Minister who is publicly appointed to be your teacher. If you have such knowledge, thank the Giver of all wisdom for it, but be not puffed up by it; do not on that account scornfully separate yourself from the public worship of God: for though you may think yourself too wise to be instructed, I will venture to say that you will never be too good to be amended; your Minister may, probably, tell you nothing that is new, for truth is homely and old-fashioned; but you ought not to have *itch-*
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*ing ears,** or to expect entertainment at your churches: he will put you in mind, however, of your duty; his admonitions may blow up the dying embers of your devotion, and purge from your heart the dross of avarice, the filth of sensuality, the abomination of impiety, the wiles of Satan, and the corruptions of the world.

Do not, at any period of life, absent yourself from your Parish Church, from a dislike to your Minister. Just occasions of dislike, I hope and trust, will seldom arise; but if they should arise, you will only injure yourself by suffering an attention to them to exclude you from the House of God. Ministers of the Gospel are men of like passions with others; they may accidentally fall into indiscretion of conduct, though they are more culpable than others if they do not avoid it. They, as well as others, have temporal concerns to attend to for the support of themselves, and of their families: it may happen that they may be less zealous than they ought to be
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in the discharge of their pastoral duties, and more eager than you wish them to be in pursuit of their temporal interests. But you must remember, that they are not answerable to you for their conduct in either particular, but to another Master, even to Christ their Lord and your Lord, who will certainly call them to a strict account. When you are angry with them, whether justly or unjustly it matters not, you must not think of vexing them, as is too commonly the practice, by absenting yourself from Church; for in vexing them you ruin your own peace; you feed the malignity of an improper passion, your temper becomes unchristian, and you neglect what it is your main interest to attend to, the public worship of God.

THE public worship of God consists of various parts, and there is one part of it on which it may be useful to say a few words, because many persons are apt to neglect it; and you, before you were confirmed, or were ready and desirous of being so, could
not

not be admitted to it; and you ought now to be kept no longer from it; I mean—the celebration of the Lord's Supper,—or the receiving the holy Communion,—or the receiving the Sacrament; for these are but different manners of expressing the same thing.

BE not alarmed with improper apprehensions on this head. You are yet, I trust, free from those habits of sinning which unhappily deter so many persons of a more advanced age from being partakers of this rite. You have no inveterate malice against your neighbours, no gross sensuality, no stubborn impiety, to repent of and forsake: you may approach the Lord's Table with confidence and thankfulness; and the sooner you come to it, and the oftener you frequent it, the more likely will you be to attain, and persevere in that habit of holiness which it is so well adapted to promote, and the promotion of which is the main end of every religious ordinance. I do not here undertake to explain

plain to you at large the nature of the Lord's Supper; many volumes have been written on the subject, and some of them very injudiciously; a plain and intelligible rite has been construed into a superstitious observance; and I wish to preserve you from those perplexities and fears, by which the minds of many persons are so bewildered and affrighted, that they never celebrate this rite at all. You are to consider the receiving the holy Communion—as the celebrating of a rite which Jesus Christ commanded to be observed, in remembrance of his having laid down his life for the redemption of the world.—The redemption of the world from everlasting death by the blood of Jesus, is a stupendous Instance of the Mercy and Wisdom of God: you will not, probably, in this mortal state, be ever able to comprehend it in all its parts, but it is not necessary for you to be very curious in the matter; you may rest satisfied with knowing, that the eternal God, out of his abundant kindness and meer good pleasure, *sent his only-begotten Son*

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into the world, that we might live through him;* that this Son, the first-born of every creature, came down from Heaven to give life unto the world;† submitted to the death of the cross that he might shed his blood for the remission of sins,‡ and be the Lord both of the dead and living;§ that this Lamb that was slain now liveth, having the keys of hell and of death,|| possessing all power in heaven and in earth,¶ and being become the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.† This is the great principle of the Gospel; and if you think of it with any degree of reverence (and it deserves to be thought of with the highest), your mind will be warmed with the highest love for God, who planned this scheme of redemption, and with the sincerest gratitude to his Son, who executed it. What difficulty then can you have in testifying this gratitude, by partaking of a rite which he instituted for the express purpose of keeping in your mind the remembrance of what he has done for you? You ought, indeed,

* 1 John iv. 9. † John vi. 33. ‡ Matt. xxvi. 28.

§ Rom. xiv. 9. || Rev. i. 18. ¶ Matt. xxviii. 18.

† Hb. v. 9.

indeed, when you solemnly commemorate the death of Christ, to consider whether he has not died in vain as to you : you ought to examine the state of your soul, and resolve to abandon all your sins, before you come to the Lord's Table. But this examination and this resolution it is your duty to make at all times : you must not be so simple in understanding, as to think yourself excused from the performance of it till you judge fit to receive the sacrament ; for if you never receive the sacrament at all, you will be under the same obligation to abandon your sins, as if you received it every day ; and if from any motive whatever, you neglect to receive it, in addition to your other sins you will add that of neglecting a clear and positive command of your Saviour and your Judge ; and how at the *last day* you will answer this contempt of his command, it behoves you to consider *now* ; before an intercourse with the world has hardened your heart, before a loss of innocence has rendered your return to righteousness more difficult ; before this which

is the day of salvation be passed, and all your hopes buried with you in the grave.

THERE is no cause why you should be terrified from performing this rite by some expressions which you will meet with in your Common Prayer-book; such as being guilty of the body and blood of Christ, eating and drinking your own damnation, provoking God to plague you with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death, if you receive the sacrament unworthily. It is far from my intention to render you easy and secure under your sins; or to induce you to come to this holy rite, by withholding from your knowledge any thing that the Scripture has delivered concerning it; but as these expressions have contributed greatly to frighten men from the Lord's Table, it is necessary that you should be acquainted with their proper meaning, which will best be ascertained by considering the occasion on which they were first used. These expressions are taken from the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle

to

to the Corinthians. Corinth was a city of Greece; it was a custom in that country for neighbours to meet and sup together; but the peculiarity of the custom consisted in this, that every man carried with him to the place of meeting his own provisions, and thus some were more amply supplied than others; some had an opportunity of becoming drunken, whilst others had not enough to satisfy the calls of nature. The Corinthians had so far mistaken what had been told them concerning the Lord's Supper, as to suppose that it was of the same nature with their customary meetings; at least they seem to have celebrated it in the same way; for every *one took his own supper* when he thought fit, without waiting for the rest, *and one was hungry and another was drunken.** This manner of receiving the Sacrament St. Paul told them was quite improper; *it was eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord unworthily;* and in so doing they were *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord†*—guilty of irreverence towards the Institution; they eat and

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drank

* 1 Cor. xi. 21.

† 1 Cor. xi. 27.

drank their own damnation, not discerning the Lord's Body,—they eat and drank in a way which exposed them to the temporal Judgment of God, because they made no distinction between the Supper of the Lord and a common entertainment; and God's condemnation of their conduct was manifested by the extraordinary punishments which he had inflicted on them; for *this cause many of them were weak, many sick, and many dead.**

If this be the true explanation of the Apostle's words (and many learned and pious persons think that it is), you see how little reason you have to fear that you will receive the Sacrament unworthily, in the sense in which St. Paul uses that word; or that you will incur the guilt which was incurred by the Corinthians: for you will not commit any intemperance at the Lord's Table; nor will you irreverently consider the Sacrament as a common entertainment; but you will with great piety and gratitude remember the death of Christ;
you

* 1 Cor. xi. 30.

you will eat bread as a memorial of his body which was broken, you will drink wine as a memorial of his blood which was shed for you and all mankind; and in doing this you will discern the Lord's Body; for not discerning of which the Corinthians were punished with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. But though you receive the Sacrament with a due sense of its nature, and in obedience to the command of him who instituted it; yet you must not think that this act will absolve you from all sin, or free you from all condemnation; you must remain obnoxious to that whilst your life is opposite to the terms of Salvation delivered in the Gospel. And that your life may not be opposite to these terms, I sincerely advise you to partake frequently of the holy Communion. The circumstances and solemnity of the rite have a direct tendency to improve your moral disposition; the remembrance of the death of Christ will make you reflect on the nature of Sin which occasioned it, and on the benefits derived to you, if you be not wanting to yourself, from it;

you will repent of your past sins, and make strong resolutions of amendment of life; and the Grace of God, which is on this as well as on all other occasions ready to assist your own endeavours, may enable you to keep them.

ANOTHER help towards the attaining of a pious and religious disposition is—The reading of the Word of God.—There are two ways by which your mind may become filled with proper notions of the existence and nature of the supreme Being; either by contemplating his works, or reading his word. If your understanding has been enlarged by a liberal Education, and you have been instructed in the principles of true Philosophy, especially of Astronomy, you cannot fail of having your mind occupied by the most sublime and devout conceptions of the power, and wisdom, of that adorable Being who formed the Universe. You will see evident marks of design in every part of it; and such an harmony in the whole as, if properly considered, will con-

convince you that it is the work of *one*, powerful, intelligent, and *benevolent* Being; the *invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.** If your Education has been more humble and confined, still the works of God, properly attended to, will exalt your mind to an admiration of his perfections. You may, indeed, pass your life in extreme ignorance and stupidity, without ever thinking of the Author of it; but it is certainly your own fault if you do so; for the very succession of day and night, of seed time and harvest, the structure of your body, the change of your food into blood and flesh, are all such obvious effects of his power and goodness, as, if reflected on at all, will become occasions of your piety. God *in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways: nevertheless, he left not himself without witness in that he did good, and gave them rain and fruitful seasons†.* But to us Christians he hath been abundantly gracious; he hath

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not

* Rom. i. 20.

† Acts, xiv. 16.

not left us, (and thankful ought we to be for the preference) he hath not left us, as he hath hitherto left the greatest part of the human race, *to seek him if haply we might find him,** by the glimmering of our own reason; but he hath guided us to the most complete knowledge of his attributes, and of our dependance on him, by the light of revelation.

It used to be a custom in all families to read the Bible, especially on the Lord's Day; and I hope it is so still in many. I am sure no sort of reading can be more profitable for instruction in matters of infinite importance to every one of us, nor for consolation to the afflicted, nor for reproof to the abandoned, nor for help to the unbeliever, nor for increase of godliness to the sober-minded. I intreat you therefore to make yourself well acquainted with this most valuable Book: there is a kind of charm in it which will protect you from the assaults of the devil, and preserve you from the practice of great wickedness.

You

* Acts, xvii. 27.

You may occasionally fall into temptations, and even be subdued by them; but if you are constant in reading your Bible, it will be almost impossible for you not to leave off sinning presumptuously. Its precepts will so open your heart to a sense of what is right; its promises of everlasting glory and peace in heaven with God and his Saints, will so excite your hopes; its threatenings of everlasting ruin and misery in hell with the Devil and his Angels, will so alarm your fears, that you must be quite abandoned of God, and given over to a reprobate mind, if it does not arouse you to a great piety of heart and probity of life.

THUS have I pointed out to you—*private prayer and meditation on the nature of God—an attendance on every part of his public worship, and especially on the Lord's Supper—and the constant reading of your Bible*—as the most probable means of generating in your heart that Reverence for the supreme Being, which is the first of all your duties; and which, if you once really ac-

quire it, you will find to be the chief of all your comforts. Rank, power, wealth, learning, fame, all the objects which you may have been instructed to admire, and which you see the greatest part of the world so eager in the pursuit of, are not to be compared, as sources of real satisfaction, with the possession of a strong and rational piety: *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*,* and the love of him is the completion of happiness.

If you take pains to cultivate that temper, which I have here exhorted you to acquire, as a jewel of inestimable price, you will have less occasion for instruction in other matters; your piety will protect you against the devices of Satan, the infirmity of the flesh, and the allurements of the world. I will proceed, however, to give you some cautions respecting a point of great importance to your welfare here and hereafter—Self-government.

You will soon be left to your own management;

* Prov. i. 7.

nagement; the care of Parents and Masters which has hitherto, it is to be hoped, directed you in the right way, will be withdrawn from you, and you will be permitted to follow the bent of your disposition. The law of God, the law of your country, and the fear of the world's censure, will all contribute to keep you from acts of flagrant impiety; though their several injunctions do not, in all cases, tend to the same point, nor reach equally far: and that they may have more power over you, you must endeavour to get the mastery over yourself; you must learn to regulate your passions. All our passions are given us for our good, they become evil by their excess; reason has been afforded us to prevent that excess; and all laws human and divine have the same object in view. Religion does not require us to be without appetites and passions; for whilst we possess our present nature, whilst we are susceptible of pain and pleasure, from whence all our passions are derived, it would be impossible for us to be free from them; but

it does require us to restrain their excess. I will instance in a few particulars, beginning with a general, and in many persons a very ungovernable appetite.

THE desires by which young persons of different sexes are impelled to seek the society of each other are not culpable in themselves; the continuation of the world depends upon them; parental affections spring from them; and they are a main source of that domestic love and friendship by which, in a conjugal state, the evils of life are lessened, and our benevolence is enlarged. But these desires are not to be indulged to excess in any state; nor are they to be indulged at all in an improper manner; their impetuosity is to be restrained till they can be gratified by marriage: were they never to be gratified in any other way, marriages would be far more frequent; the nation would be much better peopled; and thousands of individuals of both sexes would be more happy. The unchastity of females is yet held in great disrepute; and though

a few flagitious women of rank and fortune may have attempted to affront the modesty of the world, and to put innocence out of countenance, by impudently forcing themselves on the notice of the Public; yet is there no reason at present to apprehend, that this disregard of the principle of female honour will become general.

It is much to be lamented, that the chastity of men is not so highly valued as that of women; there is no precept in the Gospel which allows more indulgence to men than to women in this particular, for there is none which allows any indulgence to either. Both are under the same obligation *to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul**—*to mortify the deeds of the body*†—*to flee fornication.*‡ Considering the great purity which is commanded by the religion we profess, it is matter of astonishment to see with what little compunction of conscience men, in every country of Christendom, plunge themselves into
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* 1 Pet. ii. 2.

† Rom. viii. 13.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 18.

all manner of uncleanness. Be not you misled in this matter by fashion, nor prostitute your innocence though you should see men richer, and older, and, in other respects, wiser than yourself, obeying the lusts of the flesh without shame or remorse. This is one instance, and there are many such, in which you may be guilty of a great Sin without much incurring the world's censure; for the world in general represents incontinence in men as a trifling fault, or as none at all. But the world is a sinful and adulterous world; you must not pay any attention whatever to what it says, when its opinion is opposite to the command of God; it is this command, and this only, which you are to respect as the supreme rule of your conduct. Things may be allowed you by public opinion, and even by the laws of your country, which are not allowed you by the laws of God: thus the laws of your country will not punish you for ingratitude, nor for ill-nature, nor for pride, nor for self-conceit, nor for covetousness, nor for a censorious temper,

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nor for neglecting any of those duties of humanity on a performance of which your religion lays the greatest stress, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and being kind to the afflicted: the laws of your country only restrain you from adultery, fornication, and other outward acts of impurity; but the law of God penetrates the heart, and requires purity of thought. The opinion of the world in like manner is a very improper measure of Gospel Perfection; it often blames men for actions which God approves, and commends them for actions which God disallows: take especial heed that you be not led by it. You will meet with loose companions who will laugh at your modesty and ridicule your religion, *for fools make a mock at sin*:* the practice of the world will spread a snare for your virtue; *but if sinners entice thee, consent thou not*:† and your own passions will solicit you to part with your innocence, *for the flesh lusteth against the spirit*;‡ but remember, *that to be carnally minded*

* Prov. xiv. 9.

† Prov. i. 10.

‡ Gal. v. 12.

*mind*ed is death* — that no whoremonger, nor adulterer, nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.†—These are not my words, you will meet with them in that sacred Book which contains the laws by which we must all be judged; and though the practice of all the world should be in manifest neglect and contempt of this, or of any other law contained in it, yet will the law have its course; the declaration of God will stand fast. This prohibition, which occurs in many places of Scripture, extends not only to fornication and adultery, but to all acts of uncleanness secret and open. This is a subject I cannot dwell upon; if you know not what is meant by secret acts of uncleanness, you are happy in your ignorance, seek not to be instructed: if by bad example you have acquired any impure habit, I exhort you to leave it off, not by degrees, but at once; it will entail on you a thousand evils in this life which you cannot now foresee; and it will certainly expose you to the displeasure of God. Your self-government

* Rom. viii. 6.

† Eph. v. 5.

government, with respect to this carnal appetite, will fit you for the Enjoyment of Heaven, where flesh and blood and sensual inclinations cannot enter; it will render your marriage, when you contract it, more honourable and happy; it will secure to you a vigorous constitution in the decline of life; it will preserve you from painful and shameful diseases, to which men are exposed by their incontinence; and it will bless you with a quiet conscience for having avoided the enormous sin of having seduced the innocent, or of having contributed to keep those who have been seduced by others in the road of worldly infamy and everlasting perdition.

YOUR self-government with respect to eating and drinking will, at your time of life especially, give you less trouble than that of which I have been speaking. Drunkenness and Gluttony are such beastly vices, and so destructive of health and reputation, that the mere mention of them may be sufficient to deter you from them.

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There is, however, a bewitching festivity accompanying the use of strong liquors, which seduces most men, at one time or other, into some degrees of intemperance; and the better your constitution is, the more apt will you be to indulge yourself in this way: you should be upon your guard in this matter. Habits of drunkenness are occasioned by Idleness, by uneasiness of Mind, by fondness for Company, by a love of Liquor; but let them proceed from what cause they may, they always end unhappily. In the lower classes of life they bring on beggary; in the higher, negligence of every important concern; in both, loss of reputation, infirmity of body, imbecillity of mind, excruciating diseases, and premature death. Drunkenness is at all times odious, but on the Lord's Day it is detestable; and yet on that day it is more frequent than on any other. Many mechanics and labourers on that day spend a great part of what they have earned in the course of the week, and thus expose themselves and their families to the infamy of being supported
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either by the rates of the parish, or the benevolence of well-disposed Christians, on the slightest sickness or cessation of work. I call it infamy, because an application to others for relief becomes exceedingly infamous, when it is occasioned by riot and extravagance. I pray you not to change a day of rest into a day of debauchery ; it is a day on which your thoughts should be particularly engaged in working out your own salvation ; beware of employing it in such a manner as to increase your condemnation.

SELF-government, with regard to Anger and Revenge, is absolutely required of us as Christians, and there are few instances in which it is more difficult to attain it. When your person is insulted, your reputation traduced, your property injured, by the wantonness of unprovoked malice, the very constitution of your nature, which prompts you to avoid every thing which has given or is likely in future to give you pain, spurs you to take vengeance on your aggressor.

aggressor. But what says the Gospel of Jesus Christ? that Gospel by an absolute obedience to which your eternal happiness (words of unutterable import!) is to be determined? It bids you *not to return evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing* ;* it bids you *love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you* ;† it commands you to cultivate the virtues of kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, *to forbear one another and to forgive one another, if any man have a quarrel against any*. If your condition in life be exalted a little above the common level, you will hear maxims quite contrary to those of the Gospel, with relation to the forgiveness of injuries, spoken of not only without censure, but with praise; and this is another instance in which the opinion of the world is in clear and direct opposition to the law of God. You will hear men commended for being quick and violent in retaliating the slightest provocation; in obedience to a silly principle of fantastic honour, the least contumelious expression, uttered through
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* 1 Pet. iii. 9. † Matt. v. 44.

inadvertence, or extorted by passion, must be expiated by the blood of the offender. But I will not enlarge on a barbarous custom which is even insufficient to prove the courage it is intended to establish, since some of the best and the bravest men that ever lived have refused to comply with it, and some of the worst and the most cowardly have had recourse to it, further than to beseech you to consider, whether it is better to submit to the misplaced censure of the world, or to the condemnation of God; for you know who hath said, *if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours.**

THE generality of those whom I address are happily removed from the temptation of murdering one another in compliance with the world's opinion: offences will arise amongst all conditions of men; but in the middle ranks of life, the Tyranny of fashion has not yet required them to be avenged in such a wicked manner; this extremity of folly and impiety has not yet made its way amongst them. But you must not be contented

* Matt. vi. 14.

tented with abstaining from this excessive deviation from the Spirit of Christianity, it is your duty to stifle every propensity to revenge, in obedience to the command of God; you must reduce the proud and resentful swellings of your heart by pouring over it the dew of gentleness, patience, and peace. If you have been ill-treated by relations, friends, or acquaintance from whom you had every reason to expect returns of gratitude and affection, you will have much greater difficulty in curbing the fury of your resentment than in ordinary cases; your reason will be ingenious in finding excuses to justify your passion: but listen not to its suggestions; no circumstance can justify your disobedience to the laws of the Gospel. The temptation to revenge an unmerited injury done you by one whom you have obliged is no doubt great, and your merit in overcoming the temptation will be great in the sight of God; for it is the perfection of virtue to bring all our vicious inclinations, all our domineering passions, under an absolute subjection to the divine will.

will. There are many other passions besides these of which I have been speaking, such as Love, Jealousy, Fear, Hope, Despair, Sorrow, Envy, which it will be your interest to acquire the mastery over; for any of them being indulged to excess, may occasion a derangement of your understanding, will certainly be prejudicial to the right conduct of your life, and dangerous to that Christian temper of mind which it should be your principal study to attain.

I HAVE endeavoured, in what has been said, to persuade you to the practice of great Piety towards God, and to the proper Government of your sensual appetites and passions, as things absolutely necessary for you, if you mean to be a candidate for immortality. It remains that I give you some directions as to your conduct in the world, and that I exhort you to a contempt of its vanities. When I speak of a contempt of the world, I do not mean that you should think so despicably of it, as to be dissatisfied
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with your being placed in it; or that you should so conduct yourself in it as not to esteem its advantages worthy your pursuit. Advice of this sort would tend to produce in you, instead of meekness and peace of mind, moroseness and discontent. It might lessen, perhaps, the occasions of vice, most of which arise from our over estimating the worth of worldly things, but it would at the same time extinguish industry, frugality, and emulation; it would deaden the activity of every virtue, on the exercise of which your own happiness and the welfare of society depend. My meaning is, that you should have a comparative contempt of this world; that you should esteem its honours, its profits, its pleasures, not as absolutely evil in themselves and beneath your notice, but as relatively so, when compared with the honours, the profits, and the pleasures of the next. Christian virtue does not consist in your abstracting yourself from all the concerns of the world, but in not making them your chief concerns; not in debarring your-
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self from all the pleasures of society, but in not suffering pleasure of any kind to engage your principal attention, or to interfere in any degree, or on any occasion, with the means which the Gospel points out for your acquiring the blessings of Heaven.

IN journeying through life there is no harm in your endeavouring, by an honest exertion of your talents, to render your accommodations on the road as comfortable as you can; the harm consists in your being so wholly occupied in this business, in your placing so strongly your affections on these accommodations, as to think not at all, or but seldom, and slightly, on the end of your Journey. Whilst you are on the earth, you cannot so spiritualize your nature as to have no connexion with it; but the Eye of your faith should be steadily fixed on Heaven: every pursuit is commendable which will help to raise you thither; every gratification is innocent which does not, directly or indirectly, retard you in your progress to it: not that it will be

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prudent in you to indulge yourself to the utmost in practices which are not, strictly speaking, immoral; and the reason why you should use some restraint, is this:— by accustoming yourself to moderation in the use of things lawful, you will more easily bend your mind to a total abstinence from things which are unlawful. — No wise father grants his children even all the innocent indulgences which they ask for, because he wishes that they should acquire an habit of moderating and mortifying their desires: and no wise Christian will allow himself in the unbounded use of such pleasures as his fortune and situation in life will suffer him to enjoy; he will restrain himself, lest a giddy, easy, voluptuous life, should weaken his piety, undermine the solidity of his virtue, and rivet his affections to the earth; he will remember and apply the parable of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus*. True Religion has no tendency to make men gloomy; but it has a direct tendency to make men serious; to repress that thoughtless levity, that strange indifference

as to futurity, in which many persons, in other respects not destitute of understanding, spend their days.

WHEN you observe a Man extravagantly delighted with the splendour of his apartments, with the elegance of his entertainments, with the great number of his servants, with the magnificence of his carriages, with the costliness of his apparel, with the rank and consequence rather than with the sense and merit of his acquaintance, you may be persuaded that the mind of such a man is quite enervated and broken by the fascination of worldly vanity: he is a stranger to sentiments of real worth; so captivated with the love of the world, that he is quite alienated from the sober contemplation of the duties of religion, and the joys of heaven. You may form the same judgment of those women who employ their time in studying how to adorn their persons with the greatest elegance; who are constantly hankering after some new fashion in dress, and charmed

with its singularity and extravagance; who are hurrying with impatience to every place of public entertainment; who are negligent of every thing but how they may attract the notice of the world, or find amusement in the emptiness of fashionable life. Women of this turn of mind may keep within what the world esteems the bounds of innocence; there may be no broad blot of infamy on their characters; yet are their dispositions poisoned by the vanities of life: *they think it strange that others run not with them to the same excesses of riot,** and affect to despise them for their sobriety and decency of manners: instead of contemning the world, they are totally inflaved by it; the objects it presents are the only ones which engage their attention; its approbation is the end of their wishes; its opinion, the standard of their virtue. The Apostle rightly describes a woman of this sort when he says, *she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.†* An idle, thoughtless, extravagant, sensual, dissipated course of life, however customary it may be among persons

* 1 Pet. iv. 4.

† 1 Tim. v. 6.

persons of great fortunes and expectations, is a reproach to them, and a scandal to the community. Their example is of pernicious consequence: I charge you not to suffer it to have any weight whatever with you; for it is contrary to that piety, decency, temperance, and sobriety of conduct, which the Gospel requires of all Christians; and, let the fashion of the world be what it may, it is your duty to obey the Gospel, *to escape the corruption that is in the world,* to let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.†*

You, perhaps, are placed in a lower station, and preserved by your situation from the practice of such vanities as I have here mentioned; and you may be given to the applauding of your own virtue in being free from them, and to the censuring others who are ensnared by them; but you should abstain from doing either, till your virtue has been tried in the same way, and you have surmounted the temptation. Examine your heart: does not there lurk in it

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* 2 Pet. i. 4.

† Phil. i. 27.

an envious desire of the wealth which those persons enjoy? If there does, it is evident that your attachment to the vanities of the world is in principle as great as theirs; the root of folly is in you, though it be checked by the narrowness of your circumstances from shooting out into a luxuriant crop of extravagance and sin.

THOSE who are unhappily addicted to the pomp and pleasure of the world as their chief Good, are not the only persons on whom the love of it has too strong an hold; they who are engaged in the acquisition of wealth, are seldom less free from its influence. A proper attention to the improving your condition by exercising industry in your profession or calling, is laudable: but to pursue every scheme of obtaining riches, with such ardour and anxiety as many men use; to have all your thoughts so fixed on the improvement of your fortune, as to neglect the means of improving your mind in Christian virtues, is a conduct highly culpable. I speak not of the tricks
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and frauds, of the acts of manifest oppression and injustice, of the falsehoods and perjuries which men practise in their eager pursuit of wealth; for these are so clearly wrong, that it is impossible for you to be ignorant of the sin you will commit in being deliberately guilty of any of them; but I want to guard you against a too great solicitude in prosecuting your worldly interests by means which are not reckoned dishonest.

THERE are many men who, after rising up early and late, taking rest during six days of the week, are unwilling to allow themselves, their servants, or their cattle, any rest on the seventh. Sunday is with some the day on which the accounts in trade of the foregoing week are balanced, and new arrangements settled: I look upon this to be as great a profanation of the Sabbath, as if they were employed in manual labour; their hearts are as much wedded to the world on that as on any other day of the week. Others, especially in large manu-

facturing towns, follow their occupations privately, or exercise publicly on the roads of the kingdom, and in the face of the magistrates, their ordinary callings on the Lord's Day, without molestation or restraint. This is a scandalous practice, which has, within these few years, been suffered to prevail in many parts of the kingdom: there is no need of any new law to restrain it; there wants only a proper execution of the old ones; for our Ancestors had more veneration for the Sabbath than we have, and made more provisions for its due observation than we are disposed to put in force. Men may plead, in excuse for this enormity, the advantage of expedition in conveying goods and passengers from one place to another, and the general convenience of trade: but when the trade of a country is suffered to destroy all sense of religion in its inhabitants; when the love of riches becomes the governing principle of individuals, and riches are coveted in order to administer to the flagitious luxury and negligent impiety of large bodies of men,

men; as surely as there is a God who governs the earth, so surely that nation is hastening to its ruin. But leaving that matter to the consideration of those whom it may concern, my business at present is to warn you, as an individual, against contributing your share to the evil. Let not the love of the world choak in your mind the good seed of religion: be moderate in your desires after wealth, contented with reasonable gains in your calling; and grudge not the employing every seventh day in attending to concerns neither very distant, nor in any degree uncertain, and infinitely more important than any you can have here. The wealth you acquire here can do yourself little good, for the enjoyments it can procure you are quite imaginary; and it may not do your children any good at all: your care may be the occasion of their having no care; they may squander with thoughtless prodigality, what you have gathered with disgraceful parsimony: and this is still more likely to be the miserable event of all your

labour, if you have, for the sake of getting wealth, either been dishonest in your dealing with men, or negligent in your duty to God; for there is truth in the old observation which says, that—ill-gotten wealth is soon spent.—*An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed.**

IN this world provision may be reasonably made for your well-being whilst you pass through it; but none ought to be made for your staying in it. The folly of mankind is in nothing more unaccountable, than in their living here as if they were always to live here. They reason very well concerning a part of their existence, but ill concerning the whole of it. They plant, and they build, adding house to house, and field to field, for a temporary accommodation; but they neglect the cultivation of piety, charity, and temperance, the advantages of which are everlasting. There is one light in which this world may be justly esteemed highly important—it is

* Prov. xx. 21.

is the School in which we are to be educated for heaven—and we become guilty of great folly, when we view it in any other light.

HE who considers himself as placed in this world in order to take his pleasure in it, will soon find that its joys are neither great nor lasting. The sensual appetite is destroyed, and produces misery instead of happiness, if it be not kept within the strictest bounds of moderation; and if it be properly restrained, still the pleasure it affords is much lessened, if not wholly annihilated, by the disease and inability of enjoyment incident to old-age. If he be bent on amassing wealth, *he will hate his labour, because he must leave it to the man that shall be after him, whether he be a wise man or a fool.** If he be ambitious of acquiring rank in society, and desirous of transmitting his honours to his posterity, he cannot but see the nothingness of his pursuit, when he reflects, that a few revolving ages will bury in utter oblivion the memory of

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* Eccl. ii. 18.

himself, of his posterity, and probably of his country; or if a greater permanence should attend his civil pre-eminence, than the ordinary course of human affairs intitles him to expect, yet he must know, that, as to himself, there will be an absolute end of it in a very short time; and he cannot but have his apprehensions, that his posterity may be neither more virtuous, nor more happy, for the distinction to which he has raised them. Thus every pursuit of man which has not a tendency to improve his moral disposition, to render him pious, sober, benevolent, and fit for Heaven, is, in strict truth, mere vanity. Yet is not life itself a vain thing, nor ought it to be despised by any one, how much soever he may despise the general labours of mankind, as a gift unworthy of God. No: this life is a great blessing, inasmuch as it is in itself a source of comfort to us here; but especially as it is the first link of a chain by which we may, if we think fit so to do, ascend into the highest Heaven. Considered in this manner, life appears to be of
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the utmost possible consequence; all complaints of its vanity must cease in the mind of him, whose heart is penetrated with this plain and certain truth—that on the use he makes of this life, his everlasting condition, as to happiness or misery, intirely and irreverfibly depends.

You will form a wrong notion of Heaven if you confider it as a place which God's goodness may put you in poffeffion of, without your having previously acquired a difpofition to enjoy it. God is undoubtedly very good; and I wifh you always to look up to him as to a gracious and merciful Being, who hath no pleafure in the death of the wicked; but the declarations of fcripture which denounce everlasting deftruftion on thofe who continue in unrighteoufnefs, are exprefs and frequent. God wifheth that all men fhould be faved; but he hath no where faid that he will work a miracle to fave any man, by changing his difpofition; and without an holy difpofition it is impoffible that you fhould

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see God, or partake of the good things which he hath prepared for those that love him. It ought to be the one great business of your life to acquire this disposition; all other pursuits are but as the dust of the balance, when compared with the weight of this; and this is an object which may be aimed at with equal hopes of success by men in every condition of life. You may not have as good a chance as your neighbour hath of becoming wealthy, powerful, or learned; but you have the same opportunity that he hath of following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: of these virtues you may certainly acquire as great a portion as he can; and without these, wealth, power, and learning, will be of no use to you; they will not procure you admittance into Heaven; they will not enable you to lay hold on eternal life.

God is equally good to us in his threatenings, and in his promises. By his Promises he incites us to the practice of such
virtues.

virtues as are absolutely necessary to render us *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light*;* and by his Threatenings he warns us to avoid such a course of action, such a temper of mind, as will, of natural consequence, exclude us from Heaven. A father of a family cannot explain to his young children the nature of all the consequences which will attend their actions; yet out of goodness to them he threatens them with punishment for lying, swearing, cruelty, obstinacy, impiety, because he foresees that these vices will be utterly inconsistent with their happiness, when they arrive at man's estate. The universal Father, in like manner, we may believe, cannot explain to us in this first stage of our existence, the nature of all the consequences which will naturally attend a wicked course of life; yet out of infinite mercy to us, he threatens us with punishment in another world for every sin committed in this, because he foresees that an habit of sinning will unfit us for the participation of Heaven, and fatally plunge us into

* Col. i. 12.

into irretrievable misery. Thus all our actions have tendencies beyond the present scene; their moral influence is, in the order of nature, certain and everlasting.

THINK seriously of this matter; *have your conversation in Heaven; * walk by faith; † set your affections on things above, not on things below, ‡ except so far as to make things below instruments of your attaining things above.* Remember for what purpose you were born; through the whole of life look at its end, and consider, when that comes, in what will you put your trust;—not in the bubble of worldly vanity, it will be broken—not in worldly pleasures, they will be gone—not in great connexions, they cannot serve you—not in wealth, you cannot carry it with you—not in rank, in the grave there is no distinction—not in the recollection of a life spent in a giddy conformity to the silly fashions of a thoughtless and wicked world, but in that of a life spent *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. §*

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* Phil. iii. 20.

† 2 Cor. v. 7.

‡ Col. iii. 2.

§ Tit. ii. 12.

THERE is no caution more necessary to be given you, than that you be not conformed to the world, that you do not esteem every practice innocent which you see sanctified by example; but that you make it your study to find out and walk in that narrow path, by how few soever you may see it frequented, which will certainly lead you to Heaven. Men in general are very cold and negligent in their piety, much given to sensuality, and wholly occupied in the trifling concerns of this mortal life: you must endeavour not to be carried away with the stream, not to follow even a multitude to destruction, but to imitate persons of better judgment. There are some in every country who live under a constant sense of their duty to God; who practise self-government; who consider themselves as strangers on earth, sitting loose to its connexions, and aspiring after heaven as their only good. These are the persons whose company you should covet, whose example you should follow; you will see in them gentleness, patience, goodness, heavenly

venly-mindedness, all those Christian virtues by the practice of which they have on earth a foretaste of Heaven, peace of mind, good-will of men, and a just confidence in God: *Be not you slothful, but a follower of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.**

I JUDGE it needless to give you any direction as to your conduct towards your parents or relations, towards your superiors or equals, towards those in general with whom you may be connected, either by the natural ties of blood, or by the instituted relations of civil society; for you know very well your duty in these points; and if you will but act according to your knowledge, all will go well with you. I say you know your duty as a child, as a subject, as an apprentice, or an hired servant, and as a neighbour: for I presume you have learned your Catechism; and the answer which is given in it to the question—what is thy duty towards thy neighbour—explains in such a clear and concise manner the seve-

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* Heb. vi. 12.

ral branches of your duty, in whatever situation you may be placed in the world, that it would be superfluous to say any thing in addition to what is there delivered. I have only to desire you to keep that answer always in your memory, and to act in conformity to it. Think not, because you were made to repeat that Answer when you were a child, in the presence of those who taught you your Catechism, that it is a childish thing, and may be forgotten by you when you are grown up: on the contrary you will do well to repeat it every night of your life, with a due attention to the importance of every part of it; and to repent of and amend your conduct, if any of your actions in the preceding day has been in contradiction to it. This practice, if persevered in, will have a very beneficial effect on your temper and behaviour through life.

THERE is a failing, not uncommonly met with amongst young persons who have been piously and soberly educated, against
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which I must caution you—it consists in their being so afraid of the censure of the world, or, more properly speaking, of the ridicule of the most wicked and foolish part of the world, as to be ashamed of being thought virtuous and religious.—Having received principles of piety, benevolence, and self-government from their parents, and finding, when they are pushed into the world, that they are often laughed at for their chastity, their temperance, their patience under insults, or their devotion, they pretend to be guilty of vices which they really avoid, and affect to conceal or disguise virtues which they really practise. It is not unusual to hear them scoffing at religion, lest they should be thought enthusiasts; boasting of a fiery and resentful temper, lest they should be deemed cowards; insinuating a shameful intercourse with abandoned women, lest they should not be esteemed men of gallantry; swearing at every word, that they may be looked upon as men of spirit; and abusing the frequenters of public worship as hypocrites, lest they themselves should incur the imputation

tion of being superstitious. And all this is done by them in direct opposition to their own conscience: they inwardly tremble at the terrors of the Gospel; and, for a time at least, till they become hardened in sin, they secretly implore pardon of the Almighty for their open profaneness. But to young men of this disposition, and to all others, of whatever age, who, from a false shame and fear of the world's censure, dare not publicly profess their belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, dare not act up to what they think right, there is a short declaration made by our Saviour himself, which they would do well seriously to consider—*Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the Glory of his Father.**

THERE are some other sources of vanity besides worldly grandeur or wealth, against which you should be on your guard; but, as they are not of a very general nature,

* Mark viii. 38.

ture, and may probably apply to the case of few only, I shall but just mention them. I mean the vanity arising from ambition and learning. To be ambitious of distinction in the world, is a commendable quality, when it excites men to the performance of illustrious actions for the benefit of human kind. But this ambition is so seldom directed to its proper end, and is so little scrupulous in the choice of the means which it employs for the accomplishment of its purpose, that it frequently ruins the morals of those who are actuated by it; and thus, for the pleasure of being lifted up for a moment above the common level of mankind, of being made a spectacle for silly people to admire and applaud, of having his ears stunned with the senseless noise of popularity, many a man has forfeited his character with the wise and good, and inflicted wounds on his conscience which the balm of flattering dependants can never heal.

THE love of learning itself is not to be gratified

gratified beyond a certain limit; it must not be indulged to the injury of your health, nor to the hindrance of your virtue; of that virtue which is employed in discharging the duties of your station with firmness and activity. What will the fame derived from the profoundest learning avail you, if you have not learned to be pious, and humble, and temperate, and charitable? Your wisdom is nothing worth, unless you are wise in working out your salvation; your researches into the depths of philosophy are but the triflings of an idle mind, unless they teach you to search out God, to adore his inscrutable perfections, and to regulate all your conduct in obedience to his will. If the condition of your parents is such as enables them to give you a learned Education, it will be a shame for you to disappoint their hopes by idleness and profligacy: you must use diligence in acquiring all the knowledge you can of such branches of study as you shall be directed to cultivate; but you must not suffer the praises you hear bestowed on learning
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to induce you to believe that there is nothing more excellent as a qualification; for piety is more excellent, so is benevolence, so is sobriety, so is every virtue which adorns a Christian. You must not let your knowledge puff you up with vanity, for there can be no cause for your presumption. You may know a little more than those who have not been instructed as well as you have been, or than those whom God hath not favoured with as good talents as he hath given you; but those who know the most of any subject, know so little of it, that their knowledge is to them only a more convincing proof than other men have of the great and general weakness of the human understanding: if your knowledge produces that reflection in you, instead of vanity, its fruit will be humility; and if it does not produce it, it deceives you.

To all the motives by which I have endeavoured to stir up your mind to the practice of religious duties, I will add one more, and it is a motive of such vast weight, that
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if it produces no effect in you, I shall despair of being able to do you good in any other way, than by praying to God that he would soften the obduracy of your heart; for you must be, young as you are, either hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, or corrupted by the influence of worldly custom, or ruined by a neglected education. The motive I mean is—a Judgment to come.—If there was to be an end of all when there is an end of life, you would be in some measure at liberty to make your choice between virtue and vice; and though you would make a bad choice in preferring impiety, injustice, and debauchery, as principles of conduct, before the fear of God, honesty, and sobriety; yet, as the effects of your bad choice would terminate with your life, your folly might admit some excuse. But this is not the case: the end of this mortal life, is the beginning of one which will have no end; you must lead an eternal life in another world, whether you desire to do it or not. Have you ever seriously thought how long this future life will last?

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Yes,

Yes, you will tell me, you know it will last for ever. You answer right; but have you weighed the importance of the word—EVER?—It is a little word, and soon passes the lips; but the largest capacity cannot fully comprehend its meaning. Compare it with a thousand, or with ten thousand, or with ten times ten hundred thousand years, and you will find the longest period you can imagine, to be so greatly exceeded by it, as to be absolutely no part of it at all. A grain of sand is a part of the earth, a drop of water is a part of the ocean, but the greatest number of years is no part of eternity. This consideration is wonderful in itself; but it becomes inexpressibly interesting, when you know that nothing less than this eternity will be the measure of the length of your future life. How would you wish to spend this endless life? There is no doubt you will say—happily. God is very good to you; he has provided for you means of happiness in the other world far exceeding any thought you can form of them in this; but this happiness will not become

come yours till you have stood your trial; and the issue of that trial may be, not happiness, but misery; misery in degree unspeakable, in duration endless! But perhaps you hope that, when you are brought to your trial, the mercy of God will pardon your sin through the merits of Jesus Christ: alas! the very best of men, those who have spent their whole lives in piety, righteousness, self-government, and contempt of the world, will be obliged to rest all their hopes of salvation on that Ground; and *if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?** If pious resolutions in sickness, and a few sorrowful sighs when men can sin no more, could save them through the merits of Christ, he himself would not have said—*strait is the gate, and narrow is the path which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*†—for every man might find it; the whole world might walk in it; it would be broad enough to admit men staggering with excess of wine,† tottering with the dis-

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eases

* 1 Pet. iv. 18.

† Matt. vii. 14.

‡ 1 Pet. iv. 3.

eases of lasciviousness, bloated by ambition, blinded by avarice, encumbered by vices of every kind. If the righteousness of Christ is to be so imputed to mankind, that it will save them who have done nothing to save themselves, our present life would not be represented in Scripture as a *warfare*, a *race*, a *combat*, in which we must fight against the flesh, the world, and the devil; for we might, on that supposition, be the fast friends of them all through life, and yet be saved at the end of it. *But, little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous.** Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, *shall inherit the kingdom of God.†*

I HAVE now given you, in as plain a manner as I could, my advice on some of the most important points that can possibly engage the attention of any human Being. There is little in what I have written which

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* 1 John, iii. 7.

† 1 Cor. vi. 9.

is above your comprehension at present, nothing undeserving your attention at any time: I hope you will not read negligently, what I have written faithfully, and with a sincere desire to serve your best interests. You must not consider this address as a matter of course, which may be once read, and forgotten for ever; I hope it will be read often, and remembered always. I have been at some trouble in stepping out of the ordinary way, that I might prevail upon you, who are placed in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to set out and persevere in the right way. Long before you will have attained the full vigour of your age, I shall, probably, be called to render an account of my labours: Oh! that I may then have the comfort of knowing, that this my zeal for your salvation has not been without its use! May *the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,* when the Trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised,† when*
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* 1 Thess. v. 23.

† 1 Cor. xv. 52.

the state of every individual, and of you
and me among the rest, shall be fixed for
ever and ever.

I am

Your faithful Servant in Jesus Christ,

RICHARD LANDAFF.



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1 Cor. xv. 21.

1 Cor. xv. 21.